

UPDATE

What You Need to Know about Eating and Diabetes

How Food Affects Your Blood Glucose

Whether you have type 1 or type 2 diabetes, what, when, and how much you eat all affect your blood glucose. Blood glucose is the main sugar found in the blood and the body's main source of energy.

If you have diabetes (or impaired glucose tolerance), your blood glucose can go too high if you eat too much. If your blood glucose goes too high, you can get sick. Your blood glucose can also go too high or drop too low if you don't take the right amount of diabetes medicine.

If your blood glucose stays high too much of the time, you can get heart, eye, foot, kidney, and other problems. You can also have problems if your blood glucose gets too low (hypoglycemia). Keeping your blood glucose at a healthy level will prevent or slow down diabetes problems. Ask your doctor or diabetes teacher what a healthy blood glucose level is for you.

How can I keep my blood glucose at a healthy level?

- Eat about the same amount of food each day.
- Eat your meals and snacks at about the same times each day.
- Do not skip meals or snacks.
- Take your medicines at the same times each day.
- Exercise at about the same times each day.

Your Exercise Plan

What you eat and when also depend on how much you exercise. Exercise is an important part of staying healthy and controlling your blood glucose. Physical activity should be safe and enjoyable, so talk with your doctor about what types of exercise are right for you. Whatever kind of exercise you do, here are some special things that people with diabetes need to remember:

- Take care of your feet. Make sure your shoes fit properly and your socks stay clean and dry. Check your feet for redness or sores after exercising. Call your doctor if you have sores that do not heal.
- Drink about 2 cups of water before you exercise, about every 20 minutes during exercise, and after you finish, even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Warm up and cool down for 5 to 10 minutes before and after exercising. For example, walk slowly at first, then walk faster. Finish up by walking slowly again.
- Test your blood glucose before and after exercising. Do not exercise if your fasting blood glucose level is above 300. Eat a small snack if your blood glucose is below 100.
- Know the signs of low blood glucose (hypoglycemia) and how to treat it.

